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Fiscal Year 2012 Annual Results Report

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

AIS	Agricultural Input Shop
AQIM	Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb
BCC	Behavior Change Communication
CB	Cereal Bank
CDA	<i>Chef de District Agricole</i> / Chief of Agricultural District
COGES	<i>Comité de Gestion</i> / Management Committee
CRENAM	<i>Centre de Récupération Nutritionnelle Ambulatoire pour Modérés</i> / Moderate Malnutrition Recuperation Center
CRENAS	<i>Centre de Récupération Nutritionnelle Ambulatoire pour Sévères</i> / Severe Malnutrition Recuperation Center
CRENI	<i>Centre de Récupération Nutritionnelle</i> / Nutritional Recuperation Center (Hospitalization)
CSB	Corn Soy Blend
CSI	<i>Centre de Santé Intégré</i> / Integrated Health Center
EVPC	<i>Equipe Villageois de la Promotion et de la Croissance</i> / Village Growth Monitoring and Promotion Teams
FCFA	<i>Franc de la Communauté Financière Africain</i> / Franc of the Africa Financial Community (currency)
FFP	Food for Peace
FY	Fiscal Year (October 1st - September 30th)
g	Gram
IR	Intermediate Result
MAM	Moderate Acute Malnutrition
MT	Metric Ton
MYAP	Multi-Year Assistance Program
SAM	Severe Acute Malnutrition
SO	Strategic Objective

UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WHO	World Health Organization

1. Introduction: Annual Food Aid Program Results

During fiscal year 2012, Counterpart International continued consolidating program activities in the Gouré and Maine Soroa departments. Counterpart maintained its original intervention methodologies, but focused on improving health and nutrition behaviors among caretakers, pregnant/lactating women and adolescent girls following recommendations from the audit by the Regional Inspector General, the mid-term evaluation and FFP missions to Niger.

The agro-pastoral season of 2011 was distinguished by poor spatio-temporal rain distribution combined with crop attacks by insects. According to the Government of Niger's analysis of the harvest, there was a cereal deficit of 519,639 MT, corresponding to about 14% of the population's requirements. The poor rainfall distribution also negatively impacted the pastoral communities. The resulting irregular development of vegetation resulted in a dry fodder deficit of 10,222,308 MT.

In addition, prices of essential commodities in the local markets increased compared to those of 2010 during the same period. Thus, the inflation is about 34% for millet, 31% for sorghum, 20% for corn and 4% for imported rice (BIH OCHA, 01 2012). Furthermore, Niger has been affected by negative factors related to the ongoing crisis in Nigeria: religious extremism, partial declaration of state of emergency, borders closing, and street manifestations which resulted from increase in prices due to petroleum price deregulation.

The results of the last countrywide nutritional survey conducted by the Government of Niger found a countrywide global acute malnutrition rate of 14.8%, according to the 2006 WHO norms. This rate, while below the emergency threshold of 15%, increased compared to that of the June 2011 survey (12.3%), but decreased compared to the 2010 report (16.7%). In the case of severe acute malnutrition, the rate increased from 1.9% in June 2011 to 3.0% this year. The prevalence of severe acute malnutrition returned nearly to the rate observed in 2010 (3.2%).

At the regional levels, the results show that the nutritional situation is « crucial », according to the WHO classification (Global Acute Malnutrition > 15%), in 4 regions: Zinder (15.9%), Maradi (16.2%), Tillabéri (16.6%) and Diffa (16.7%). For these 4 regions, the severe acute malnutrition rate exceeds the emergency threshold rate of 2%.

The basic program assumptions remained the same. The political atmosphere in Niger remained stable after the military rule handed over the power to the civilian government in 2010. The Counterpart program areas also remain stable. The government of Niger maintained its policies and priorities on the health and food security sectors.

According to the GON, the 2012 harvest will be better than 2011. However, the yield will not allow the producers to fully recover since people could not prevent getting in debt and selling their properties at low cost in connection with the consequences of several years of recurring drought and bad agro-pastoral harvest. The agricultural and livestock production yields point to food insecurity that will persist through many years. Continued assistance is therefore required to improve the food security situation through the wetland farming and the use of improved seeds in arid areas.

The mid-term evaluations conducted in November 2011 confirmed that the first 3 years of the MYAP has produced positive results against the majority of baseline indicators. For example, age-for-weight scores decreased from 43.3% at baseline to 33.9% at mid-term. However, it

also identified weaknesses in terms of the efficiency of integrated approaches designed to promote antenatal and post-partum care, micronutrient supplementation, immunization and treatment of major childhood illness. Findings confirmed that the MYAP could capitalize on innovations in accomplishing more sustainable health benchmarks with less dependence on external assistance. The positive performances against quantitative indicators reflect the intensity and effectiveness of services delivered by MYAP.

Counterpart has started to capitalize on these initiatives, and is developing an integration strategy to achieve greater impact, implement program activities with a gender focus, and to build further on the resiliency and sustainability. In FY13, Counterpart is planning a gradual and progressive phase-out which will focus on all activities.

IR 1.1: Improved Access of Communities to Cereals

During FY12, Counterpart monitored the activities of the 215 cereal banks previously established. The table below shows the distribution of the cereal banks by department and commune.

Table 1: Situation of Cereal Banks Monitored in FY12

Department	Commune	Number of Cereal Banks
Gouré	Gouré	28
	Guidiguir	19
	Bouné	23
	Kellé	27
	Gamou	19
	Alakos	9
Sub-Total Gouré		125
MainéSoroa	Mainé	30
	Goudoumaria	30
	Foulatari	4
	N'GielBely	3
Sub-Total Maine Soroa		67
Diffa	Bosso	11
	Toumour	2
	Gueskerou	8
	Chetimari	2
Sub-Total Diffa		23
Total		215

Counterpart monitored cereal bank activities such as decision-making procedures, stock management, organization of sales sessions, stock replenishment, commodity pricing, indebtedness of members, management of committee members, financial management, and status of bank accounts. The table below shows the program's achievements against specific targets for FY12 pertaining to cereal banks.

Table 2: Targets and Achievements of Cereal Bank Activities

	Target	Achieved	Direct Beneficiaries		% Achievement
			Men	Women	
Cereal Bank COGES members	1,505	1,505	1,016	489	100.0

Trained in Cereal Bank Management at end of FY 12					
Cereal Bank COGES Trained in FY12	215	215	-	-	100.0
Cereal Banks Having Secured a Bank Account	215	85	-	-	39.53
Sustainable Cereal Banks	150	68			45.00

Training of Cereal Bank Management Committees

In FY12, Counterpart organized training for the 28 COGES members who were not trained in FY11, due to floods in the Diffa region, making their communities inaccessible at the time of the trainings. This brings the total number of COGES trained to 215 and the total members trained to 1,500.

The training, conducted by Counterpart's CB/AIS Specialist and the Maine Soroa Agriculture Department Director, and facilitated by the Chief of the Agricultural District Office, covered the following areas of cereal bank management:

- ✓ Roles and Responsibilities of COGES members
- ✓ Good governance
- ✓ Marketing strategy
- ✓ Funds securing
- ✓ Stock management

In addition to the trainings, Counterpart monitored all COGES and their members and provided technical support as needed.

Sustainability of Cereal Banks

In FY12, FFP/Dakar conducted an assessment of the cereal banks at the end of the harvest season which found that 68 of the 215 cereal banks (31.6% of total, 45% of target) were sustainable (possessing cash and commodities equal to or exceeding 133% of the initial stock value). Counterpart followed up on FFP/Dakar's recommendations in the areas of management training, stock management, and increasing sustainability of cereal banks. One recommendation to be pursued in FY13 is networking among cereal banks. Another recommendation to be pursued in FY13 is assisting the most vulnerable persons while still assuring cereal bank sustainability. To this end, Counterpart will explore the possibility of using established norms and practices, such as *zakat* (charity).

Securing Cereal Bank Accounts

In 2011, the RIG audit recommended that the revenues generated by the cereal banks be secured in bank accounts. In response, Counterpart International worked with the cereal bank management committees to open bank accounts. Prior to establishing the bank account, a cereal bank must have a legal agreement with the government. Counterpart facilitates the legal process for the cereal banks and then assists them to open the bank accounts. By the end of FY12, 85 cereal banks had secured their funds in accounts with local financial institutions. Together, the 85 cereal banks have a liquidity amount of \$354,471 including \$130,607 held as petty cash at the local level and \$223,864 secured in the bank accounts.

Cereal Bank Transactions

Stock Management

The cereal banks are involved in two main transactions: purchase of cereals at the end of the harvest season in order to replenish their old stock, and sale of their stock at the peak planting season in order to offer cereal at reduced prices to community members. At the beginning of the sale session, the 215 cereal banks had a combined total of 1,601 MT of cereals in their stock, including 1,324 MT millet, 98 MT sorghum, 23 MT maize, 152 MT rice and 4 MT beans. In addition to the cereal, the CBs also had a combined \$310,468 secured in bank accounts. At the end of the sale session, the cereal banks had a combined 280 MT of cereals in stock (208 MT millet, 22 MT sorghum, and 50 MT rice) and total revenue of \$624,906.

IR 1.2: Increased and Diversified Household Production

In FY12, Counterpart International focused on reinforcing the management capacities of community-based agriculture and environment organizations. Counterpart monitored 119 community-based organizations, providing technical support to a total of 1,853 farmers (1,032 men and 821 women) including 1,200 wetland farmers, 653 arid-zone farmers.

Wetland Areas

In FY12, Counterpart focused on supporting 40 wetland communities, continuing to monitor and provide technical support to the wetland management committees. In total, Counterpart trained 1,230 persons, of which 819 were men and 411 were women.

Table 3: Targets and Achievements of Wetland Activities

	Target	Achieved	Direct Beneficiaries		% Achievement
			Men	Women	
Wetlands monitored	40	40	-	-	100.0
Irrigation systems utilized	40	40	766	334	100.0
Persons trained in market gardening crops and fruit tree production	1,230	1,230	819	411	100.0
Land area(ha) cultivated under market gardening	250	222	681	519	88.8

In FY12, Counterpart provided support to the farmers' associations in the following areas:

- Crop spacing
- Preparation and application of organic manure
- Identification and treatment against striga (a parasitic weed which grows in association with millet)
- Appropriate use of canals in the established irrigation systems
- Crop watering techniques (methods, water conservation, and optimal timing)
- Advantages associated with the various cultivation methods

In total, 1,200 farmers (681 men and 519 women) cultivated 222 hectares. The principal crops included cassava, onion, cabbage, maize, wheat, lettuce, tomatoes and carrots. The production from the vegetable gardening activities improved the resilience of the farming families, allowing them to cover more than 4 months of their food needs at the household level. Additionally, the income generated from the sale of their agricultural produce increased funds available for their health, clothing and socio-cultural financial needs.

Arid Areas

Analysis of rainfall intensity and distribution forecast better harvests in 2012 than in 2011. Seeds (millet and beans) selected from the harvests from the 2011 crop season were cultivated and monitored in 2012 in 7 communes in the target zone. A total of 1,496 farmers (1,033 men and 463 women) who received improved millet and beans seeds for planting in 2011 selected seeds out of their harvest for planting in FY12. With 6.28 MT millet and 4.839 MT bean seeds, the farmers cultivated a total of 684 hectares in 2012. An estimated 298.207 MT millet and 312.711 MT beans will be harvested in 2012.

To ensure the sustainability of the improved seeds, Counterpart worked with communities to establish management committees for each farmer's association. In FY12, Counterpart trained the committees and their members in community-level seed management, collection of seeds, redistribution of seeds, and stock management.

Table 4: Targets and Achievements of Arid Area Activities

	Target	Achieved	Direct Beneficiaries		% Achievement
			Men	Women	
Women trained in animal care	450	700	0	700	155.6
Communities reached with improved seeds	20	20	1,033	433	100.0
Producers trained in improved seed production	520	1,496	1,033	463	287.6

Note: Producer trained in improved seed production – Initially, Counterpart planned to target the seed producers (10 per village) who will produce seeds and distribute to other farmers. Due to the difficulties with these techniques and the urgency during the food crisis in 2011, Counterpart decided to provide seeds directly to those who are vulnerable and women producers. Counterpart provided training to the beneficiaries in techniques of improved seed production.

Women trained in animal care: Initially, Counterpart planned to train only those women who already had goats. Counterpart now provides training to all women in the solidarity groups, as they will receive goats in turn.

Goat Breeding and Distribution

Counterpart has distributed 1,575 goats to women's associations located in 56 villages between 2009 and 2011. At the end of FY12, the total stock was 4,037 goats. The associations had sold 140, 14 were lost, 18 died, 82 were given out to members, and 56 were consumed at the household level. In total, 2,422 goats were born in 2012.

Due to the low production of milk per goat per day, collection of data on milk production was not envisaged at the beginning of this initiative. However, Counterpart has found that a significant level of milk is produced, according to the women. Many households have reported ceasing milk purchase for home consumption.

IR 1.3: Improved Household Marketing Strategies

As part of its strategy under the marketing strategies, Counterpart implements activities such as grain mills, the agricultural input shops, training for the AIS management committees, and distribution of donkey carts for transportation of goods to market centers.

Grain Mills

In FY12, Counterpart monitored the activities of 24 Grain Mill Management Committees, composed of 120 women. From receiving one grain mill per association, the committees have received a total of \$21,290 in income. Of this, the committees spent \$15,511 and had a remaining balance in their account of \$13,458.

In Boune Commune, some associations used their income to buy goats to share among the group (similar to the goat-sharing groups set up by Counterpart) and to finance micro-loans to members. This led to a lower balance at the end of FY12 than at the end of FY11

Table 15: Schedule of Operations of Milling Machines

Commune	Grain Mills	Balance FY11	FY12 Receipts			Operational Expenses	Balance FY12
			In-Kind	Cash	Total		
Goudoumaria	5	\$1,183	\$61	\$5,367	\$5,428	\$3,749	\$2,862
Boune	6	\$1,117	\$133	\$2,719	\$2,852	\$3,012	\$957
Gamou	4	\$1,038	\$334	\$2,290	\$2,624	\$1,764	\$1,898
Guidiguir	3	\$1,932	\$143	\$4,151	\$4,294	\$3,142	\$3,084
Kelle	3	\$1,610	\$113	\$2,720	\$2,833	\$1,985	\$2,458
Maine Soroa	3	\$799	\$38	\$3,221	\$3,259	\$1,859	\$2,199
TOTAL	24	\$7,679	\$822	\$20,468	\$21,290	\$15,511	\$13,458

Donkey Carts

In FY12, Counterpart supported 26 Women's Associations by providing each association with two carts to facilitate the transport of agricultural produce to markets, providing value addition to those products. The associations have identified other uses in their villages for the carts: providing transport during community events (marriages, funerals, naming ceremonies, etc.), transport of water for drinking or for construction, transport of firewood or wood for construction, transport of other goods, and transport of sick or injured persons to the Integrated Health Centers or Health Posts. The revenue (cash and in-kind) accruing from the services rendered by these carts are collected and managed by a selected Management Committee, which is held accountable by the community General Assembly. In FY 13, Counterpart International will document the cost-effectiveness of this activity.

During a USAID visit to the field, the amount of US\$230 was declared as income from the services of the donkey cart by one Women's Association after operation for nine (9) months. This represents approximately 90% of the purchase value of the cart. The women were planning to invest the money in vegetable production materials and supplies during the 2012-2013 production season. Across the program, women beneficiaries of the donkey carts have increased their income through these activities, providing them with the opportunity to buy other donkeys and carts. Furthermore, the men in the village have recognized the importance of this income generating activity by women and how women are contributing to the household expenses. The women are also saving time, as they used to walk long distances to water points and to the local market.

Agricultural Input Shops

In preparation for the impending vegetable gardening season, the AIS had a total quantity of 40.04 Kg of improved vegetable seeds including cabbage (3.055 Kg), lettuce (0.795 Kg), tomatoes (22.56 Kg) and onions (13.63 Kg) in stock for sale to farmers. The 34 AIS management committees had a total amount of \$2,358 in cash and \$1,577 given out as credit

to farmers. In FY13, Counterpart International will strengthen existing mechanisms for collecting funds lent out to farmers to ensure cost-effectiveness of AIS operations.

IR 1.4 – Improved Natural Resources Management Practice (Protection of Arable Lands against Desertification and Decrease in Soil Fertility)

Counterpart's assessment of the mechanical and biological fixing of sand dunes in FY12 found that the biological fixation was not as successful as the mechanical fixation. The success rate of the biological fixation is estimated at between 10% – 32% versus a success rate of 95% for mechanical fixation. In FY13, Counterpart International will identify well-adapted trees with the help of the communities and the government technical services.

IR 2.1: Improved Local Capacities to Prevent and Treat Under-Nutrition

In FY12, Counterpart focused on nutritional education, growth monitoring of children 0-36 months, screening of children 6-59 months, treatment of malnutrition cases in the health facilities, providing logistics for referral of severe malnutrition cases from CSIs to the district hospital, and supporting the Goure Health District to conduct outreach consultations and mass vaccinations.

At the community level, Counterpart supported EVPC teams in 56 communities. The EVPC teams implement activities such as weighing children regularly, monitoring their weight, performing BCC sessions on health, nutrition and hygiene topics, screening children 6-59 months, referring malnourished children to the nearest CSI, and supporting the Goure Health district with outreach consultations and vaccination campaigns.

Screening Children

On a monthly basis, the EVPC conducted growth monitoring for children (0 – 36 months). In FY12, the EVPC teams weighed 11,115 children 0-36 months. Of these, 906 children were weighed by the EVPC for the first time in FY12.

EVPC teams screened a total of 17,405 children 6-59 months, using the Mid-Upper Arm Circumference (MUAC) measurement in FY12. Of the children screened, 949 were found to be suffering from MAM or SAM and were referred to the health centers for assistance.

Behavior Change Communication

EVPC teams reinforced the capacities, knowledge and competencies of 4,287 persons (730 men and 3,557 women) through BCC sessions.

Outreach Visits

Counterpart supported the district hospital by providing resources for outreach visits conducted by GOV health agents of the CSIs. These outreach visits enabled the health district personnel to travel to rural communities to perform prenatal care, family planning consultations, vaccinations to women and children, and screen children for malnutrition. These outreach visits resulted in:

- 1,295 antenatal consultations;
- 1,792 tetanus vaccinations given to women of procreating age (15-45 years old);
- 55 pregnant women receiving iron supplements and malaria medicines as part of antenatal care;
- 4,355 vaccinations given to children 0-11 months for childhood diseases (BCG, poliomyelitis, diphtheria, pertussis, tetanus, Hepatitis B, measles, yellow fever);

- 1,875 pregnant and lactating women trained in practical ways of prevention and treatment of malnutrition and other diseases, exclusive breastfeeding, young child feeding, and showing affection to their children;
- 1,717 women using one method of family planning.

Vaccinations

In FY12, Counterpart International supported five vaccination campaigns against polio in the district of Goure. Additionally, Counterpart supported vaccination campaigns against meningitis for infants aged 1 to 15 years. A total of 5,818 infants were vaccinated.

IR 2.2: Improved Nutritional Status of Children (0 – 59 months), Pregnant and Lactating Women

Treatment of Malnutrition

In FY12, Counterpart supported 15 health centers in identifying and treating 9,907 children 6-59 months for MAM and SAM

Through the health centers, Counterpart provided protection rations to pregnant and lactating women. In total, 6,929 women (3,238 pregnant women and 3,691 lactating women) received rations composed of bulgur, lentil and vegetable oil.

Counterpart also provided protection rations to the families of children receiving treatment for MAM or SAM. In total, 9,907 families received rations for two children each; the rations consisted of bulgur, lentil and vegetable oil.

Support to the Health District

In FY12, Counterpart provided support logistically and materially to the health district of Goure. To facilitate treatment of children suffering from SAM, Counterpart provided an ambulance and a driver for the referral of these children to the CRENI. In FY12, Counterpart transported 74 children from the health centers to the CRENI for treatment of SAM.

Counterpart International provided transportation for medicines for the systematic treatment of malnutrition and therapeutic feeding supplies from the Regional Health Office in Zinder to the Health District Office in Goure, and from the Health District Office in Goure to the CSIs. These supplies were provided to the Regional Health Office in Zinder by UNICEF.

In FY12, Counterpart International continued to support “AlloLikita,” a communication system linking the district staff, the chiefs of CSI, and Counterpart personnel. This continues to be an important communication tool, allowing the district hospital doctors to assist the chiefs of remote CSI to treat emergency cases of diseases.

2. Success Stories

Wealth Knocking at the Door

With 72 hectares of reservoir-fed land, the wetland is a valuable resource for Issoufour, a community on the edge of the Sahara. Over the years, however, the wetland had been overexploited. Beginning in 1970, the underground water table receded, making it increasingly difficult to access sufficient quantity of water for crops and forcing people to abandon the wetland and the community. When Counterpart began working with Issoufour in 2010, only 4 people worked the wetland, farming less than 1 hectare combined.

With the wetland unusable and rainfall uncertain, the community relied more and more on the economic migration of men like Fadjimi Boula, who traveled to Libya to find work at 18 years of age. Now 40 years old, with 6 children, Fadjimi recently returned to Issoufour:

“To my surprise, I found wells constructed in our wetland, with many women busy cultivating vegetables. Since the wetland belongs to everyone in the village, I decided to begin cultivation on our family’s land in the wetland. Before my first harvest of maize, I had three months of food to feed my family. But none of my family member intended to leave the house, since the wetland products were doing well. I produced cabbage and onion, which I sold on the market for a total amount of \$650. With this amount, I purchased a motor pump for have a greater production yield and income generation. In the following offseason campaign, I sent my first child to school and replaced the roof on my house.

With Counterpart’s support, over 11 hectares of land are being cultivated by over 50 families. Economic migration has slowed, family revenues are increasing, and the community has, as Fadjimi says, “realized that wealth was just knocking at our doors and ready to take us to new heights. Apart from what we produced, this assistance has reunited us and we have come to settle and to continue producing vegetables in our wetland.”

With funding and commodities from the United States Agency for International Development, Counterpart International is implementing the Strengthening Community & Household Resiliency to Food Insecurity in Niger program. Counterpart supports 303 communities to strengthen their resilience to food insecurity.

3. Lessons Learned

Niger experienced another food crisis in 2012. In the program intervention areas, where communities have cereal banks, the elected leaders and counselors had a strong participation in monitoring the cereal banks. During this period the government was also doing subsidized sales. These local leaders provided guidance to the cereal bank committees to allow the cereal banks to sale their stocks at the right moment. These initiatives show that the leaders understand the importance of the cereal banks in providing access to the vulnerable populations. As the program continues to build on the resiliency of the cereal banks this leadership participation demonstrates the communities’ effort to ensure the resiliency and sustainability of the cereal banks.

The “Allo Likita” system provides a network between the doctors of the district hospitals of Goure with the nurses of the integrated health centers. This system has assisted in filling the need for efficient communication and sharing technical knowledge amongst the health staff. It has reduced costs, prevented several evacuations, and saved lives as doctors are now able to quickly communicate with nurses to give medical consultation. Creating this network has allowed Counterpart to do more with program resources.

The coordinated effort by the Government of Niger, international organizations and United Nations agencies has been very effective in responding to the food crisis this year.

4. Attachments:

- A. Indicator Performance Tracking Table;
- B. Detailed Implementation Plan;
- C. Standardized Annual Performance Questionnaire;

- D. Tracking Table for Beneficiaries and Resources;
- E. Expenditure Report;
- F. Monetization Tables;
- G. Completeness Checklist.